

Call for Soviet Withdrawal From Afghanistan

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Following is a statement by Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, U.N. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, before the U.N. General Assembly, November 24, 1982. Also included is the text of the U.N. General Assembly resolution adopted on November 29, 1982.

Once again the issue of Afghanistan is before the General Assembly. Once again, in what is by now a familiar exercise, one representative after another will come before this body to decry the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the continuing and increasingly brutal attempt to subjugate the Afghan people. And once again we will consider, and hopefully adopt by another overwhelming majority, a resolution calling for the withdrawal of the Soviet occupation force, respect for Afghanistan's right of self-determination, restoration of Afghan independence and nonalignment, and the return of the Afghan refugees to their homes in safety and honor.

The familiarity of this exercise must not be allowed to detract in any way from its extraordinary significance. Of all the issues before this assembly, none has more far-reaching implications than the issue of Afghanistan. The aggression committed by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and its proxies elsewhere has had and continues to have a great impact upon the climate and course of East-West relations. Such aggression ominously affects the entire fabric of international relations and the future of the state system based upon respect for the principles of territorial integrity, national independence, and political

sovereignty. These actions bear directly upon the capacity of states, especially those most vulnerable, to retain their unique identities and to fulfill their aspirations in peace and security.

The Afghan people are fighting for their own survival, but their struggle has a much broader meaning. If a small, relatively defenseless, nonaligned country like Afghanistan is allowed to be invaded, brutalized, and subjugated, what other similarly vulnerable country can feel secure? If the fiercely independent and incredibly courageous people of Afghanistan are uprooted, economically ravaged, culturally annihilated, and eventually subdued, the survival of other peoples—even those equally resilient—will be endangered.

The effort to subjugate the Afghan people and to impose upon them a form of alien and totalitarian rule has been marked by a degree of violence against the population that is exceeded in the recent past only by the terrible tragedy in Kampuchea. The crimes against the Afghan people have taken place far from the eye of world publicity, behind a tight curtain of totalitarian disinformation and thought control. Still, the story of the brutality has come out—as it often does in such situations—from refugee accounts and from reports of journalists and doctors who have ventured into the country.

One measure of the extent of the violence inflicted upon the Afghan people is the number of refugees uprooted from their homes and forced to flee to neighboring countries. When the illegitimate regime of Babrak Karmal was installed as a result of the Soviet invasion, the number of refugees in Pakistan had

already reached 400,000. These refugees had fled the reign of terror unleashed against Afghanistan by the earlier Communist regimes of Taraki and Amin. Babrak promised an end to the methods of terror used by his predecessors. But in less than 3 years of his rule, the number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran has increased nearly tenfold to over 3 million, almost one-quarter of the estimated 1978 population of Afghanistan. This is the largest single refugee mass in the world for any one national group.

Even these figures fail to convey the full extent of the dislocation and suffering of Afghanistan, since there have been many hundreds of thousands of internal refugees who have fled from the rural areas where the fighting has been most intense. The depopulation of the countryside, it appears, has been the deliberate goal of Soviet scorched-earth policies in rural areas controlled by the resistance. As a result of the fighting in these provinces, many farmers have been unable to gather their crops and there is a danger this winter of famine.

The Soviet Offensive

The last General Assembly called upon the Soviet Union to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. Far from respecting the decision of the assembly, the Soviets over the past year have augmented their forces in Afghanistan to approximately 105,000, and they have conducted their most ruthless, wide-ranging, and systematic offensive of the entire war. The heightened aggressiveness of the Soviet forces became evident in January when

the Soviets bombarded, shelled, and occupied the resistance stronghold of Qandahar, Afghanistan's second largest city located some 250 miles southeast of Kabul. The brutal action in Qandahar, which resulted in high civilian casualties, was repeated 2 months later in Herat and Mazar-e Sharif and later in the spring against the northeastern town of Tashkurgan. In the early summer the town of Aq Gozar in the far northwest was rendered unfit for human habitation by systematic air and tank strikes.

As brutal as these attacks have been, the main thrust of the Soviet offensive took place closer to Kabul in the spring and summer of this year. The principal targets were villages in the Panjsher and Logar valleys and the Shomali region and districts near Kabul, particularly the mountain town of Paghman located only 12 miles northwest of the capital. These attacks have been marked by indiscriminate bombardments of villages resulting in thousands of civilian casualties, many of them women and children. Survivors also relate that Soviet troops, frustrated in their search for resistance fighters, have committed numerous acts of terrorism against civilians.

In Qandahar, for example, accounts of rape and plunder by Soviet troops following last January's bombing shocked and alienated even the most enthusiastic apologists of the Babrak regime. According to eyewitness reports from the Shomali region, in one village all males over the age of 10 were shot in the presence of their female relatives. The Swedish journalist Borje Almquist, who visited the Lowgar Province in July and August, has described similar incidents in that area, as indeed such incidents have been reported from all over Afghanistan. According to Almquist, women, children, and old men were dragged into the street and executed, while civilians with their hands tied behind their backs were used instead of sand sacks for protection in street fighting. He also reported the burning of harvests, the poisoning of food and drinking water, and the plundering of homes and shops.

The Soviets also continue to use antipersonnel "butterfly bombs" and boobytrapped objects—such as toys, cigarette packs, and pens—in gross violation of an international convention outlawing such weapons, which they themselves signed in 1981. Earlier this year a team of French doctors, which had returned from as far inland as the central highlands of Hazarajat, charged that the Soviets scatter such mines over fields, villages, and mountain paths, causing heavy casualties among inhabitants, especially among children who are

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION A/37/7, NOVEMBER 29, 1982¹

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security",

Recalling its resolutions ES-6/2 of 14 January 1980, 35/37 of 20 November 1980 and 36/34 of 18 November 1981, adopted at the sixth emergency special session, the thirty-fifth session and the thirty-sixth session, respectively,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the obligation of all States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of any State,

Reaffirming further the inalienable right of all peoples to determine their own form of government and to choose their own economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever,

Gravely concerned at the continuing foreign armed intervention in Afghanistan, in contravention of the above principles, and its serious implications for international peace and security,

Noting the increasing concern of the international community over the continued and serious sufferings of the Afghan people and over the magnitude of social and economic problems posed to Pakistan and Iran by the presence on their soil of millions of Afghan refugees, and the continuing increase in their numbers,

Deeply conscious of the urgent need for a political solution of the grave situation in respect of Afghanistan,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,²

Recognizing the importance of the initiatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the efforts of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries for a political solution of the situation in respect of Afghanistan,

1. Reiterates that the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan is essential for a peaceful solution of the problem;

2. Reaffirms the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of govern-

ment and to choose their economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever;

3. Calls for the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan;

4. Calls upon all parties concerned to work for the urgent achievement of a political solution, in accordance with the provisions of the present resolution, and the creation of the necessary conditions which would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homes in safety and honour;

5. Renews its appeal to all States and national and international organizations to continue to extend humanitarian relief assistance, with a view to alleviating the hardship of the Afghan refugees, in coordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

6. Expresses its appreciation and support for the efforts and constructive steps taken by the Secretary-General in the search for a solution to the problem;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue these efforts with a view to promoting a political solution, in accordance with the provisions of the present resolution, and the exploration of securing appropriate guarantees for non-use of force, or threat of use of force, against the political independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of all neighbouring States, on the basis of mutual guarantees and strict non-interference in each other's internal affairs and with full regard for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to keep Member States and the Security Council concurrently informed of the progress towards the implementation of the present resolution and to submit to Member States a report on the situation at the earliest appropriate opportunity;

9. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-eighth session the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security".

¹Adopted by a vote of 114 to 21 (13 abstentions and 9 absent or not voting).

²A/37/482-S/15429.

the least wary. "We have treated many children whose hands and feet are blown up by such mines," said Dr. Claude Malhuret, a member of the French medical team. He also revealed that the Soviets, fearing that the French doctors might speak about what they had seen, destroyed their hospitals in an attempt to drive them out of the country.

Boobytrap mines are not the only outlawed weapons used by the Soviets against the people of Afghanistan. They continue to use chemical weapons in

violation of both the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention which they, along with 110 other countries, have ratified. Earlier this year the United States listed 47 known chemical attacks in Afghanistan. They began as early as 6 months before the invasion and have resulted in over 3,000 deaths. These attacks have continued. Just last September a Soviet soldier captured by the resistance, Anatoly Sakharov, said that he knew of three types of chemical agents used by

the Soviets in Afghanistan. His testimony about the effects of one of them, a particularly deadly agent which he called "smerch," corresponds closely to reports given to the U.N. experts team by doctors working with refugees in Pakistan. The doctors noted that on several occasions after attacks on villages, "bodies had quickly decomposed, and limbs had separated from each other when touched." Sakharov also described a chemical attack on resistance fighters in which the Soviet soldiers had been ordered to use gasmasks. [On November 29, 1982, Secretary of State Shultz released Special Report No. 104, "Chemical Warfare in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan: An Update," which contains new information regarding the Soviet Union's continued use of illegal chemical and biological weapons in Afghanistan, as well as in Laos and Kampuchea.]

Afghan Resistance

Nothing more clearly demonstrates the courage and resilience of the Afghan freedom fighters, or the Afghan people's universal hatred of the Soviet occupation, than the fact that the resistance forces remain intact and active throughout the country despite the massive violence that the Soviets have used against them. In the Panjshir and in Paghman, for example, the Soviets were able to establish footholds as the *mujahidin* melted into the hills. But as soon as the main invading force withdrew, the resistance overran the newly established government outposts and regained control of these positions. Similarly, savage bombardments in the Shomali region temporarily drove the *mujahidin* back from the main roads but in no way broke their organization. Even in the devastated city of Qandahar the freedom fighters have been able to mount operations against the occupying forces, the most notable being a spectacular jailbreak and freeing of prisoners last August. Destroyed Soviet tanks and transport vehicles litter the roadsides throughout Afghanistan, testimony to the Soviets' continuing inability to establish security in the countryside or control over the population.

The most glaring and revealing failure of the Soviets has been their inability to build the various branches of their puppet regime's armed forces into effective units that could take over the brunt of the fighting. To date it appears that no progress has been made in this key area. Recent measures to overcome the critical manpower shortage in the Afghan Army—including the toughest draft decree yet issued, indiscriminate arrests and beatings of those resisting conscription, and incentive payascols for recruits almost equal to sub-Cabinet

salaries—have been fruitless. As a consequence, press gangs have returned to the streets of Kabul and provincial cities, and young men have been forcibly conscripted in house-to-house searches. The futility of these various measures was demonstrated during the summer fighting when large-scale defections, surrenders, and desertions by Afghan soldiers led to a net loss of military personnel.

The failure of the Soviets to break the resistance by military means and the self-evident fact that the Soviet aggressors and their Afghan proxies are rejected by the Afghan people have not caused the Soviets to relent in their desire ultimately to subjugate the country. Instead, they show every sign of pursuing a long-term strategy, looking on the one hand to the gradual wearing down of the resistance through attrition and on the other hand to the military, economic, and social integration of Afghanistan into the Soviet sphere.

The Soviets have already taken significant steps in this direction. They have consolidated their military, transport, and communications infrastructure, including the expansion of existing air fields and the completion of the bridge across the Amu Darya River. They have tightened their grip on the strategic Wakhan corridor, which rests on Pakistan's northernmost border and links Afghanistan with China, and they have tied Afghanistan's economy tightly to those of the Soviet bloc through a proliferation of economic and trade agreements.

Perhaps most significant is the Soviet effort to reshape Afghan culture and to replace the decimated intellectual and middle classes with a new elite trained in the Soviet mold. Thousands of Afghans, including even children between the ages of 6 and 9, are being trained in the Soviet Union and other bloc countries, while the Afghan educational system itself is being restructured along Soviet lines. The Sovietization of Kabul University is made evident by the presence of Soviet advisers at all levels of administration and instruction and in the preference given to party activists in admissions. The curriculum of Afghanistan's primary education system has been redrawn to promote indoctrination in Marxist-Leninist ideology and to prepare young Afghans for further study in the Soviet Union.

It is in light of these policies—and the continuing escalating, savage Soviet military involvement—that we must view Moscow's repeated claim that the Great Saur Revolution of April 1978 is "irreversible." But what, one may legitimately ask, gives the Soviet Union the right to insist that the violent overthrow of a nonaligned government constitutes

an "irreversible" revolution? According to what tenet of international law, on the basis of which article of the U.N. Charter, do they base their position? One would think that it is the Afghan people, and only the Afghan people, who have the right to determine whether the events of 1978 are or are not "irreversible."

In fact, the Afghan people made their decision long ago. They rejected a revolution the chief accomplishment of which before the Soviet invasion was the arrest, torture, and execution of tens of thousands of Muslim clerics, teachers, civil servants, doctors, and engineers. They rejected a revolution the cruelty and sadistic violence of which are best symbolized by the mass burial pits outside Pol-e Charkhi prison and the massacre at Kerala. They rejected a revolution which systematically assaulted Islam and Afghan nationhood and turned their proud country over to its predatory northern neighbor.

They expressed this rejection in the form of a spontaneous, countrywide resistance movement. By invading Afghanistan in order to crush this resistance and maintain in power a hated, Marxist regime, Moscow took a momentous step which signaled the expanding scope of its political and territorial ambitions. In effect, for the first time it was claiming the right to apply the Brezhnev Doctrine to a previously nonaligned, Third World country.

International Rejection of Soviet Occupation

The world has not permitted this act of expansion and aggression to go unchallenged. It has rejected the claim advanced by Soviet propaganda that it is providing "fraternal assistance" to Afghanistan with its "limited military contingent." These words ominously echo assurances which were given to Afghanistan itself 60 years ago when it protested the entry of Soviet troops into two of its neighbors, the independent Muslim states of Khiva and Bokhara. Let me quote from a letter which the Soviet Ambassador in Kabul sent to the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs on February 20, 1922:

Concerning the question of the independent status of Khiva and Bokhara, this has been provided for in the treaty agreed to and signed by the two governments of Russia and Afghanistan. The Government which I represent has always recognized and respected the independence of the two Governments of Khiva and Bokhara. The presence of a limited contingent of troops belonging to my Government is due to temporary requirements expressed and made known to us by the Bokharan Government. This arrangement has been agreed to with the provision that whenever the Bokharan Government so requests, not a single Russian soldier will remain on

Bokharan soil. The extension of our friendly assistance in no way constitutes an interference against the independence of the sovereign State of Bokhara.

Today, 60 years later, the Soviet Union provides the same justification and the same assurances with respect to its invasion of Afghanistan. It is useful, therefore, to reflect upon the ultimate fate of Khiva and Bokhara. Two years after the Soviet Ambassador gave his assurances to the Government of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union annexed Khiva and Bokhara. Their languages, Turkish and Persian were abolished and replaced by pseudolanguages fabricated by Soviet linguists. These languages, Uzbek and Tadzhik, were mere dialects of Turkish and Persian but were transcribed into Latin and later Cyrillic script. Mosques were closed or changed into museums and Koranic education was abolished. The surviving members of the local factions the Soviets had supported with their invasion were executed on charges of "bourgeois nationalist deviationism" and replaced by young bureaucrats trained in new Soviet schools.

Is history repeating itself today in the case of Afghanistan? If we are to judge from Soviet actions to date, it is hard not to conclude that they intend that history shall repeat itself, if not through the formal annexation of Afghanistan, then through its de facto absorption into the Soviet empire. And if this is allowed to happen, can anyone be reasonably assured that this will be the end of the process, that there are not future Khivas and Bokharas and Afghanists that await a similar fate?

It is not, therefore, simply moral considerations and human solidarity that link us to the fate of the Afghan people.

At stake in their struggle is respect for the principles of the U.N. Charter; the principles of the non-use of force; and respect for the territorial integrity, national independence, and political sovereignty of states. Without this respect, world politics would succumb to anarchy and domination by the most ruthless, expansionist predator.

We cannot—we must not—permit this to happen. The Soviet leaders undoubtedly believed when they launched their invasion of Afghanistan that they could deal with the international reaction by waiting patiently for the world's outrage to subside. The General Assembly can take great credit for frustrating this strategy. Passage of time has not served the aggressor. Indeed, the adoption of resolutions on Afghanistan by increasingly large majorities over the last 3 years shows that the world's outrage is growing.

We now have an opportunity to reaffirm once again our commitment to the liberation of Afghanistan. In so doing, we can help remind those in the Kremlin who ordered the Soviet invasion that their strategy has failed. We cannot afford, either as individual states with our own security concerns, or as a world organization dedicated to maintaining world peace, for the Soviet leaders to have any doubts on this score.

The resolution before us today offers an honorable course for ending the Afghanistan crisis. Its objective is a peaceful, negotiated settlement leading to the withdrawal of Soviet forces; the restoration of Afghan self-determination, independence, and nonalignment; and the return of the refugees to their homeland. By adopting this resolution, the U.N. General Assembly will be impressing on the Soviets the necessity to

negotiate an end to their misadventure. Hopefully, this will speed the day when real negotiations on a settlement can begin.

In this context, the United States wishes to express its appreciation to Secretary General Perez de Cuellar for his effort to probe the opportunities for a settlement which would implement the General Assembly resolutions. We support these efforts and urge the Soviets to cooperate with them. We also recognize, as the Secretary General said in his report to the General Assembly this year, that "time is of the essence." If the Soviets truly desire to negotiate, they must come forward quickly or the rest of the world will be forced to conclude that they have no serious interest in reaching a settlement.

The alternative to a negotiated settlement is a continuation of the conflict, with far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for world peace. The Afghan people, unbowed and unbroken despite repeated and relentless hammer blows, have shown that they will not submit to aggression—not now and not ever. They have proved themselves to be a strong, proud, heroic people. With our support and solidarity, they shall also once again become a sovereign and independent people, permitted, as President Harry Truman once said, to work out their own destiny in their own way. This is all that they seek. It is all that we, the member states of the United Nations, seek for them. ■

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